

Application No. 09/933,567

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims shows all pending claims and indicates whether each claim is currently amended, was previously presented as a new or amended claim in a prior response, remains as originally filed, or is newly presented. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Amended) A computer-implemented method, comprising the steps of:
receiving consumer profile information over a distributed network;

storing the consumer profile information in a central data repository comprising a plurality of information accounts associated with a plurality of different consumers, logically associated with a plurality of exchanges, each information account associated with at least one exchange, wherein an exchange comprises a group of one or more servers that are authorized and configured to accept the consumer profile information from a particular information account at the request of a consumer;

receiving requests from the exchanges for consumer profile information in specific information accounts; and

responding to said requests by conveying some or all of the consumer profile information to the requesting exchange, provided that the information account storing the consumer profile information is associated with the requesting exchange.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said central data repository further comprises, for each information account, an identification of an originating vendor or entity, said method further comprising the step of:

maintaining a transaction log recording utilization of each information account to allow for compensation to the information account's originating vendor or entity.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said requests are initiated from activity at user computers in communication with the exchanges over the distributed network.

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5. (Previously Amended) A computer readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions for causing one or more processors to perform the acts of:

receiving consumer profile information over a distributed network;

storing the consumer profile information in a central data repository comprising a plurality of information accounts associated with a plurality of different consumers, logically associated with a plurality of exchanges, each information account associated with at least one exchange, wherein an exchange comprises a group of one or more servers that are authorized and configured to accept the consumer profile information from a particular information account at the request of a consumer;

receiving requests from the exchanges for consumer profile information in specific information accounts; and

responding to said requests by conveying some or all of the consumer profile information to the requesting exchange, provided that the information account storing the consumer profile information is associated with the requesting exchange.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 5, wherein said central data repository further comprises, for each information account, an identification of an originating vendor or entity, and wherein said computer-executable instructions cause the one or more processors to perform the further act of:

maintaining a transaction log recording utilization of each information account to allow for compensation to the information account's originating vendor or entity.

8. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 5, wherein said requests are initiated from activity at user computers in communication with the exchanges over the distributed network.

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9. (Previously Amended) A system for managing information, comprising:

a central data repository accessible over a distributed network, said central data repository comprising a plurality of information accounts associated with a plurality of different consumers, logically associated with a plurality of exchanges, each information account associated with at least one exchange, wherein an exchange comprises a group of one or more servers that are authorized and configured to accept the information from a particular information account at the request of a consumer; and

a host server in communication with the distributed network, said host server receiving requests from the said exchanges for consumer profile information in specific information accounts, and responding to said requests by conveying some or all of the consumer profile information to the requesting exchange, provided that the information account storing the consumer profile information is associated with the requesting exchange.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 9, wherein said central data repository further comprises, for each information account, an identification of an originating vendor or entity, and wherein said host server maintains a transaction log recording utilization of each information account to allow for compensation to the information account's originating vendor or entity.

12. (Original) The system of claim 9, wherein said requests are initiated from activity at user computers in communication with the exchanges over the distributed network.

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13. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method, comprising the steps of:

- receiving consumer profile information relating to a plurality of different consumers and storing the consumer profile information in a central data repository comprising a plurality of information accounts, associated with a plurality of different consumers, collectively associated with a plurality of exchanges, each of said exchanges comprising a logical grouping of one or more servers communicating with user devices over a distributed network, and each information account being associated with at least one of said exchanges, wherein the one or more servers are authorized and configured to accept the consumer profile information from a particular information account at the request of a consumer;
- receiving requests from the servers in said exchanges for consumer profile information in specific information accounts; and
- responding to said requests by conveying some or all of the consumer profile information to a server within the requesting exchange, provided that the information account storing the consumer profile information is associated with the requesting exchange.

14 - 19. (Withdrawn)

20. (Previously Amended) A method, comprising the steps of:

- gathering consumer profile information relating to a plurality of different consumers at a plurality of exchanges, each exchange comprising a logical grouping of one or more servers communicating with user devices over a distributed network;
- sending the consumer profile information to a central data repository for storage in information accounts, associated with a plurality of different consumers, each having an affiliation with one or more of the exchanges, comprising one or more servers that are authorized and configured to accept the consumer profile information from a particular information account at the request of a consumer;
- requesting retrieval of consumer profile information from servers in the exchanges; and
- receiving the requested consumer profile information respectively at each of the requesting servers if the information account is associated with the requesting server's exchange.

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21 - 62. (Withdrawn)

63. (Previously Amended) A system comprising:

a central data repository storing a plurality of branded information accounts, relating to a plurality of different consumers, each comprising a plurality of consumer information elements, stored in a tagged data format, associated with a consumer and an identification of a sponsor of the branded information account; and

a host server for managing communications between the central data repository and network devices across a distributed network, said host server being configured to retrieve selected consumer information elements from the central data repository in response to requests from the network devices, and to transmit the selected consumer information elements across the distributed network for use by the requesting network devices.

64. (Original) The system of claim 63, wherein the sponsor of the branded information account comprises a vendor or entity that facilitated creation of the branded information account by the consumer.

65. (Original) The system of claim 63, wherein the host server receives consumer authentication information along with the requests for selected consumer information elements; and wherein the host server is further configured to access the branded information account to authenticate the consumer based on the authentication information prior to releasing the stored consumer information elements to the requesting network device.

66. (Original) The system of claim 63, wherein at least one of the network devices comprises a client device executing a browser for interacting with a web page file hosted by a vendor server;

wherein the vendor server is a member of an exchange comprising a logical grouping of servers authorized to interact with one or more of the branded information accounts;

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wherein the host server is further configured to receive an exchange identifier for identifying the exchange, along with the consumer authentication information and the request for selected consumer information elements, and to authenticate the exchange identifier to ensure that the exchange is authorized to interact with the branded information account prior to releasing the consumer information elements to the requesting network device.

67. (Previously Amended) The system claim 63, wherein at least one of the network devices comprises a vendor server interacting with a client device;

wherein the vendor server is a member of an exchange comprising a logical grouping of servers authorized to interact with one or more of the branded information accounts;

wherein the means host server is further configured to submit an exchange identifier for identifying the exchange, along with the consumer authentication information and the request for selected consumer information elements, and to authenticate the exchange identifier to ensure that the exchange is authorized to interact with the branded information account prior to releasing the consumer information elements to the requesting network device.

68. (Original) The system of claim 67, wherein the branded information account is valid only within the exchange and not within any other exchanges.

69. (Original) The system of claim 67, wherein the branded information account is valid within the exchange and within at least one other exchange.

70. (Original) The system of claim 63, wherein the network device uses the selected consumer information to complete a transaction;

wherein the host server stores a transaction log associating the transaction with an originating vendor credited with facilitating origination of the branded information account and a transacting vendor credited with using the branded information account to complete the transaction, so that any revenue received in connection with the transaction may be shared with the originating vendor and the transacting vendor according to a revenue sharing model.

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71. (Original) The system of claim 70, wherein the revenue sharing model specifies that the revenue shared with the originating vendor or the transacting vendor comprises a specified percentage of the revenue received in connection with the transaction.

72. (Previously Amended) A system for storing, managing and distributing consumer information via a distributed network comprising:

a means for centrally storing a plurality of branded information accounts, relating to a plurality of different consumers, comprising a plurality of consumer information elements, stored in a tagged data format, associated with a consumer and identifying a sponsor of the branded information account;

means for hosting a database management system configured to create, update or delete the consumer information elements; and

means for managing communications between the database management system and a network device across a distributed electronic network, said means being configured to request selected consumer information elements from the database management system, receive the selected consumer information elements from the database management system, and transmit the selected consumer information elements across the distributed electronic network for use by the network device.